

P.ay...
Executive Registry
76 - 8685/A

August 4, 1976

Dear Eugene,

Thanks for your letter of July 22nd, which enclosed an attachment from the Church of Scientology.

You ask about the reference to CIA on page 2 of the press release. The statement is false. I hope this will help clear the matter up.

I would be remiss if I didn't make one additional comment, which is totally unrelated to Mr. Poynter. I think it is a sorry state of affairs when a person can be "smeared" by an allegation that he worked for the CIA. I recognize the sensitivity between journalists and CIA, and indeed we have taken steps here to make things better; but I still come back to the fact that it is a shame when the climate is such that cooperating with CIA in some way leaves one open to a "smear" attack. Someday I hope we have the opportunity to discuss this in person. I respect your judgment on these matters.

My perception of CIA is far different from the inside than it was from the outside. There is an awful lot of dedication, patriotism, and integrity in this place and I feel frustrated that I have been unable to make that clear to the American people.

Warm personal regards,

Sincerely,

/s/ George Bush

George Bush

Mr. Eugene Patterson
St. Petersburg Times
P. O. Box 1121
St. Petersburg, Florida 33731

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1 - DCI (w/basic)
1 - A/DCI (w/basic)
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76-8685/19

30 July 1976

Mr. Eugene Patterson
St. Petersburg Times
P. O. Box 1121
St. Petersburg, Florida 33731

Dear Mr. Patterson,

Mr. Bush asked me to look into the allegation made about the Central Intelligence Agency in the handout (undated) which you enclosed in your letter to him of July 22.

We were unaware, until the receipt of your letter, of the report by the Church of Scientology that Mr. Nelson Poynter, chairman of the board of the *St. Petersburg Times*, "was allegedly an employee of the CIA". Consequently, the statement that "the CIA confirmed the report" could not be and is not true. Apparently the Church of Scientology has not asked Mr. Poynter whether he was employed by the CIA.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Andrew T. Falkiewicz
Assistant to the Director
of Central Intelligence

Approved For Release

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Routing Slip

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Remarks:

*for preparation of response
July 30*

STATINTL

P/ Executive Secretary
7/30/70
Date

3637 (5-76)

Exhibit D
76-8685

St. Petersburg Times

St. Petersburg, Florida 33701 / P.O. Box 1121 / Area 813-893-8420

EUGENE C. PATTERSON
Editor and President

July 22, 1976

Mr. George Bush
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

Dear George:

A cult named the Church of Scientology has moved into our area. Its modus operandi is to attack, denigrate and sue the press in an effort to discourage reporting of its methods.

The outfit currently is trying to smear Nelson Poynter, chairman of the board of The St. Petersburg Times, by saying he was an employee of the CIA.

The enclosed handout, widely distributed here today, says "The CIA confirmed the report through its personnel department."

Thus the CIA as well as Mr. Poynter is misrepresented.

It is quite generally known that Mr. Poynter helped activate the U.S. Information Agency as a deputy to General William Donovan during World War II.

But he has never been an employee of the CIA. I would greatly appreciate a letter from you or your personnel department that will help us correct the record which the attached handout, on page 2, misrepresents.

With good wishes,

Sincerely yours,


Eugene Patterson

cc: Nelson Poynter, William Ballard

IS IT REALLY THE ST PETERSBURG TIMES' POLICY TO CALL FOR COMMENT????

They at least say it is. But officials of the Church of Scientology were not called before Times reporter Bette Orsini ran her so-called series this week on the Church of Scientology.

Apparently the Times wasn't interested in our comments. In fact the reason for their series was to do something quite other than report the news accurately.

Attached is our reply. Whether or not the Times carries it, is of course another matter. That is why this is being broadly distributed to citizens, so that they at least will have the other side of the story.

Thank you for reading this.

THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

For Further Information Contact:

Fred Rock
210 South Fort Harrison Ave.
Clearwater, Florida 33516

Telephone (813) 461-1267

The St Petersburg Times and reporter Bette Orsini are engaged in a deliberate campaign to adversely influence the property tax appeal of the Church of Scientology in Clearwater and the newspaper is using political skullduggery to carry out its dishonest campaign, Scientology official Fred Rock said today.

Rock made his statements following a series of articles this week in the St Petersburg Times which he called deceptive, distorted and politically motivated.

"The Times is trying to adversely influence our property tax appeal by making false innuendos about the Church of Scientology of California which owns the Clearwater facility.

In actual fact the status of the Church of Scientology of California is currently under review by the Internal Revenue Service for tax exemption. So far [REDACTED] Churches of Scientology around the country have received their IRS tax exemption. The California Church being the largest, simply takes longer than the rest."

"All the points in which the Times attacked our Church-- administration of the Church's trust fund, tithing by Churches to the Mother Church, tax exempt status of the various Churches and other points--have already been checked and approved

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by the IRS, the courts, and yearly audits by independent public accountants. This was known by the Times prior to publication of their articles yet they deliberately painted a false and distorted picture," Rock said.

"We know from contacts with the IRS that Bette Orsini had this information earlier which indicates that she must be quite aware that she is just manufacturing a false sensation timed to drum up unwarranted and unjustified adverse opinions on the part of those who will be deciding our tax exemption question," Rock said.

"The real sensation would be found in examining the Times' true motives in attacking the Church of Scientology. It is quite true that the Church has been critical of abusive government activities and has sought reforms. Now we find that certain employees of the Times seem to have strangely close ties with certain areas of the government."

Last March the FREEDOM Journal reported that information had been made available indicating that Times Chairman Nelson Poynter was allegedly an employee of the CIA. The CIA confirmed the report through its personnel department but declined to give the dates of his employment or nature of his work.

"Recently we were turned down in our request to inspect the files on our Church maintained by the St. Petersburg Police," Rock said. "It was interesting, however, that Police Chief Vines told two of us that 10% of the material in his file were follow-ups on leads given him by Times reporter Bette Orsini."

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"Orsini's series was, of course, no investigative feat as much of the information was a matter of public record and the rest were her own distortions and deliberately false interpretations of the information."

"Even certain Times employees were surprised to learn that Orsini never even called us for comment although the Times alleges that it is their policy to always call," Rock said. "Maybe these employees did not know that Bette Orsini's mission was not to report the news accurately but was to try to adversely and politically influence opinions regarding our tax exempt status."

"The intention of the Times and Bette Orsini in this matter is dishonest and underhanded," Rock said. "They are more interested in political skullduggery than reporting the news fairly. There were only two articles in the series so far; however, we expect the Times will do more articles before our appeal on our tax exempt status goes before the Pinellas County Board of Tax Adjustment."

"If the members of the Tax Board rely on the false and misleading information printed in the Times and the Clearwater Sun, a local paper in Clearwater, as did Tax Assessor Mac Haines and Assistant County Attorney James Helinger, then of course the Board will probably decide against us. This seems to be just what Bette Orsini would like to see happen."

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St. Petersburg Times

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Mr. George Bush
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505